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LETTER DATED 9 MAY 1995 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit the attached report, which was addressed to me on 9 May 1995 by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, concerning the operations of the International Conference's mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

I should be grateful if you would bring this information to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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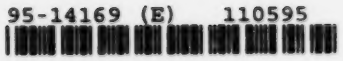

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Annex

Report by the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia

In the report on the operations of the mission of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) that the Secretary-General transmitted to the Security Council on 13 April 1995 (S/1995/302, annex), reference was made to the issue of alleged helicopter flights crossing into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The report stated that "in view of the countervailing claims by senior officials of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) as to the veracity of UNPROFOR technical data, it was agreed that experts should be asked to review the radar tapes for the period from 2 to 7 April".

The report of the expert inquiry, as submitted to the Co-Chairmen on 9 May 1995, is attached.

Appendix

Inquiry into unexplained radar traces between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Final report

## I. BACKGROUND

1. Over 100 unexplained radar contacts have been reported since 9 October 1994 by airfield monitors of the United Nations protection force (UNPROFOR) (military observers) working at air traffic control radar screens at Surcin airport near Belgrade. The characteristics of these radar contacts are, according to the military observers, indicative of helicopters crossing the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such crossings would constitute a serious violation of the measures ordered by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). These allegations are denied by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), but it was agreed that the mission of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia carry out a review of the air traffic control tape recordings, together with military and civilian experts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Consequently, the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference instructed the mission to carry out an inquiry into the unexplained radar traces. The Security Council, in resolution 988 (1995) of 21 April 1995, expressed concern over those reports, and noted that an investigation of those reports was being undertaken by the mission. A brief history of the events leading to the inquiry is contained in annex A. 1/

## II. AIM

2. The aim of the inquiry was to attempt to resolve, as soon as possible, the issue regarding unexplained radar traces detected transiting between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## III. OUTLINE OF INQUIRY

### Inquiry team

3. The inquiry team consisted of an existing mission member, as leader, and four analysts, one each from France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, attached as temporary members of the mission. Throughout the inquiry, the team members worked closely with a team of military and civilian experts from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The support and cooperation of all personnel of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

concerned with the inquiry was competent, thorough and open and those personnel provided the assistance that was requested by the inquiry team. The nominal role of the inquiry team and its counterparts from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) is described in annex B.

Surcin airport radar facilities

4. The inquiry found that, to date, all detections had been made on the air traffic control radar screens at Surcin airport, Belgrade. The air traffic control radars providing the information to the airport are Thompson CSF LP23M and Westinghouse TPS-63. The radar screen displays are synthetic images and are automatically taped in accordance with regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Such tapes are required to be retained for a minimum of 30 days.

United Nations-reported violations

5. A list of all the United Nations-reported violations since 9 October 1994 is contained in annex C. However, only those tapes retained under the current ICAO 30-day rule could be expected to be made available. At a meeting of the Steering Group on 21 April 1995, the team leader requested that all existing tapes of interest not protected by the 30-day rule be retained, and this was agreed. At the start of the review, those tapes, as listed in annex D, were requested to be made available; this list represented all tapes within the 30-day period and those outside it that were of interest and known to exist at the current time. During the course of the inquiry, the inquiry team was apprised by the United Nations military observers that they had observed a possible border violation on 29 April 1995; this trace was added to the list of tapes for review.

Phases of the inquiry

6. The inquiry consisted of the following phases:

(a) Technical examination of the radar system;

(b) Review of the radar tapes;

(c) Examination of any relevant supporting or corroborative information.

## IV. EXAMINATION OF RADAR

7. A technical examination of the radar and its supporting equipment was made to determine its general serviceability and the parameters of the system. Particular attention was paid to an assessment of its competence to track the type of target that was the subject of the inquiry. The equipment was found to be in a good state of serviceability and the parameters of the system were taken into consideration throughout the detailed examination of the tapes.

8. In outline, the system was designed and set for the air traffic control of the airspace of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and

the staff of the radar room was similarly concerned only with this discipline. No member of the staff is charged with the monitoring of unidentified radar traces crossing the border of the type that are the subject of the present inquiry. However, the duty supervisor is required to respond to an observation made by the duty United Nations military observer in such instances.

9. A detailed report on the technical examination is contained in annex E.

## V. REVIEW OF TAPES

10. Each tape was reviewed by the inquiry team together with experts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), in the following sequence:

(a) The trace was identified according to the report of the United Nations military observers, and the tape run from a time ahead of its first appearance;

(b) Each appearance of the primary radar contact was recorded by its range, bearing and time from the data carried on the tape, and this continued until the trace faded;

(c) The data were converted into a trace on the map, and other relevant technical information was considered;

(d) The resulting trace was then discussed and an assessment made of the likelihood of it representing a flying object.

11. Only 24 of the 41 traces that were requested for review were actually viewed owing to unavailability of tapes, faulty tapes and tapes not reviewed by the decision of the inquiry team. The detailed analysis and debate of these 24 radar traces gave rise to suspicion in some cases that some unauthorized border crossings by slow flying objects might have taken place; this however would be impossible to prove or to disprove, given the limitations of the radar system, without other conclusive corroborative evidence. A detailed report on the review of each tape is contained in annex F.

## VI. SUPPORTING/CORROBORATIVE INFORMATION

Authorized and recorded cross-border helicopter flights

12. The inquiry took note of those authorized casualty evacuation flights between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to make a comparison with the unexplained traces. It proved difficult to find the traces as the flights were not necessarily flying high enough to be detected by the radar. One of the flights, on 11 April 1995, was detected, but that part of its flight path that crossed the border was not visible, the trace becoming visible only when the helicopter was well inside the airspace of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). In the event, it did give a clear indication of a

helicopter trace on the radar, which was substantially the same as some of the unexplained traces.

Additional ground-based sensors

13. There were no other ground-based sensors that could provide the inquiry with information that could corroborate the tape-recordings of the unexplained traces.

Monitoring Command Coordination Centre

14. On a general request for information, the Monitoring Command Coordination Centre (MCCC) at Zagreb was unable to provide the inquiry with corroborative information on the unexplained radar traces. During the detailed review of the tapes, that made for 6 April 1995 showed that a pair of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) fighters, on patrol over Bosnian airspace, appeared to react to intercept one of the unexplained radar traces. This has been checked with MCCC, which reported that the fighters had detected a radar track but were unable to make a visual identification. MCCC also reported that UNPROFOR troops on the ground reported sighting a helicopter north-west of the Srebrenica enclave at the same time. Whilst not providing absolute proof of a cross-border helicopter flight, it was considered highly suspicious by the inquiry.

Reports of the mission of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia

15. The headquarters of the monitor mission of the International Conference has issued specific instructions to its observer teams staffing both border crossing points and mobile patrols to carry out surveillance of the air border within the limits of their capability. At those times when reports of possible cross-border flights have been received, this requirement has been stressed to all personnel on their routine daily briefings. Limited operations have also been mounted by specially tasked mobile patrols at suspected times of increased air activity. All cross-border helicopter flights observed and reported by International Conference monitoring teams have later been confirmed as authorized or admitted casualty evacuation flights. There has been no recorded instance of mission observers visually witnessing cross-border flights suggested by the radar traces observed by the United Nations military observers or any other unauthorized cross-border flights.

## VII. FINDINGS

16. The radar system displayed at Surcin airport has been set up and is calibrated for the air traffic control of the airspace of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The personnel staffing the radar room, with the exception of the United Nations military observers, are also there for air traffic control. Whilst the radar system was found to be fully serviceable and well-suited to its primary purpose, shortcomings were observed when used for detection of difficult targets flying at the limit of the radar's operational parameters and in the difficult terrain in the area where the majority of the unexplained traces have been seen. There were many sources of radar clutter

that could give rise to unexplained radar traces, which made accurate analysis very difficult. Whilst the system could indicate possible unexplained flying objects, it was difficult to prove or disprove that they were helicopters without other corroborating information.

17. The detailed analysis of unexplained traces does give rise to suspicion that some unauthorized border crossings by slow flying objects may have taken place in the past, but other evidence would be required to prove or to disprove conclusively each case. These flights, apart from a United Nations military observer report on an unexplained trace on 29 April 1995, which could not be reviewed by the inquiry, now appear to have stopped.

18. There was no other information available to prove that any of the unexplained radar traces were helicopters crossing the border. However the incident on 6 April 1995 was considered highly suspicious.

19. The International Conference monitoring mission, particularly at its current staffing level, does not have the capability to monitor effectively the closure of the air border.

Team leader _____

(Ian McLeod)

Team members _____

(Vadim V. Dikan)

_____

(Christian Lancieux)

_____

(Brian J. McLean)

_____

(Larry D. White)

5 May 1995

Notes

1/ The annexes are available for consultation with the Secretariat.

## List of Annexes*

A. Brief history of events leading to the inquiry

B. Nominal role of the inquiry team and counterparts from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

C. List of violations reported by United Nations military observers since 9 October 1994

D. List of tapes requested for review

E. Technical characteristics of the radar system

F. Report on review of tapes

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* The annexes are available for consultation with the Secretariat.